

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling a cooking appliance, the cooking appliance including a control system including a control panel and a control interface, the control panel including at least one rotary dial input device for selecting control information for the cooking appliance, the cooking appliance operatively responsive to the input entry of control information from the rotary dial, the control information including at least one of a cooking mode, a food type, a food weight, a food size, and a degree of doneness, and a control interface for providing a prompt to guide a user through an input entry of control information, the control interface configured to interact with the various cooking modes of the cooking appliance, said method comprising the steps of:

selecting a cooking mode for the cooking appliance; and

inputting control information to the cooking device.

2. A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the rotary dial input device is configured to provide tactile feedback simultaneously as the rotary dial is rotated, the rotary dial mechanically coupled to a select switch which is engaged when the rotary dial applies pressure to the select switch which is configured to input the control information displayed on the control interface to the cooking device, said step of inputting control information to the cooking device further comprising the steps of:

rotating the rotary dial to view the control information on the control interface; and

pressing the rotary dial to select the control information to input to the cooking device.

3. A method in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the rotary dial input device is configured to provide tactile feedback simultaneously as the rotary dial is rotated, the tactile feedback permits a user to determine an amount of rotation, the rotary dial configured to be rotated in either a clockwise or a counterclockwise direction, said step of pressing the rotary dial to select the control information to input to the cooking device further comprising the step of selecting a cooking mode.

4. A method in accordance with Claim 3 wherein said step of pressing the rotary dial to select the control information to input to the cooking device further comprises the steps of:

selecting the food type for cooking; and

5 selecting the food weight used in the cooking.

5. A method in accordance with Claim 4 wherein said step of pressing the rotary dial to select the control information to input to the cooking device further comprises the steps of:

selecting the food size for use in cooking; and

10 selecting the degree of doneness for the food type used in the cooking.

6. A method in accordance with Claim 5 wherein the control system enables a user to review the selected cooking information for a current cooking during the cooking, said method further comprising the step of reviewing the cooking information for a current cooking during the cooking.

15 7. A method in accordance with Claim 5 wherein the control system enables a user to adjust the cooking time for a current cooking during the cooking, said method for controlling a cooking appliance further comprises the step of adjusting a cooking time while cooking.

20 8. A control system for a cooking appliance for use in cooking, said control system comprising:

25 a control panel comprising at least one rotary dial input device for selecting control information for said cooking appliance, said control information comprising at least one of a cooking mode, a food type, a food weight, a temperature, and a degree of doneness, said cooking appliance operatively responsive to said selection of said control information from said rotary dial; and

a control interface for providing a prompt to guide a user through selecting said control information, said control interface configured to interact with at least one cooking mode of cooking appliance.

9. A control system in accordance with Claim 8 wherein said rotary dial input device is configured to provide tactile feedback simultaneously as said rotary dial is rotated, said tactile feedback permits a user to determine an amount of rotation.

5 10. A control system in accordance with Claim 9 wherein said tactile feedback comprises a resolution of approximately 15-25 counts per complete revolution.

11. A control system in accordance with Claim 9 wherein said rotary dial input device is mechanically coupled to a select switch.

10 12. A control system in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said select switch is engaged when said rotary dial input device applies pressure to said select switch.

15 13. A control system in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said select switch is configured to input said control information displayed on said control interface to said cooking appliance after said rotary dial input device applies pressure to said select switch.

14. A control system in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said rotary dial input device is configured to actively input entry of control information for said cooking appliance before and during said cooking.

20 15. A control system in accordance with Claim 8 wherein said control information further comprises at least one of adjust or review.

16. A control system in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said active input entry of control information includes adjusting a cooking time of the cooking.

25 17. A control system in accordance with Claim 8 wherein said cooking appliance cooking mode comprises a microwave mode.

18. A control system in accordance with Claim 8 wherein said cooking appliance cooking mode comprises a lightwave mode.

19. A control system for a cooking appliance for use in cooking, said control system comprising:

a control panel comprising at least one rotary dial input device for selecting control information for said cooking appliance, said control information comprising at least one of a cooking mode, a food type, a food weight, a temperature, and a degree of doneness, said cooking appliance operatively responsive to said selection of said control information from said rotary dial; and

a select switch mechanically coupled to said rotary dial input device, said select switch configured to input said control information to said cooking appliance.

20. A control system in accordance with Claim 19 further comprising a control interface for providing a prompt to guide a user through selecting control information, said control interface display configured to interact with various cooking modes of said cooking appliance.

21. A control system in accordance with Claim 19 wherein said select switch is engaged when pressure is applied to said select switch by said rotary dial input device.

22. A control system in accordance with Claim 21 wherein said select switch is configured to input said control information to said cooking appliance after pressure is applied to said select switch.

23. A control system in accordance with Claim 20 wherein said rotary dial input device is configured to provide tactile feedback simultaneously as said rotary dial is rotated, said tactile feedback permitting a user to determine an amount of rotation.

24. A control system in accordance with Claim 23 wherein said tactile feedback comprises a resolution of approximately 15-25 counts per complete revolution.

25. A control system in accordance with Claim 19 wherein said rotary dial input device is configured to actively input entry of control information for said cooking appliance before and during said cooking process.